

UPDATE

Revised Definition Means Millions More Have Pre-Diabetes

Pre-diabetes is a condition that raises a person's risk of developing type 2 diabetes, heart disease and stroke. According to the United States Health and Human Services, pre-diabetes is far more common in America than previously believed. About 40 percent of U.S. adults, ages 40 to 74 – a total of 41 million people – currently have the condition, which is marked by blood glucose levels that are higher than normal but not yet diabetic. Many people with pre-diabetes go on to develop type 2 diabetes within 10 years.

The new estimate is based on a revised, more accurate definition of pre-diabetes made by an international expert committee of the American Diabetes Association (ADA) and published in *Diabetes Care* in November 2003. Under previous criteria, it had been estimated that some 20.1 million people in the 40 to 74 age group had pre-diabetes. The new definition of pre-diabetes identifies more people who are likely to develop type 2 diabetes, highlighting the importance of preventing this disease.

Pre-diabetes may be called impaired fasting glucose (IFG) or impaired glucose tolerance (IGT), depending on the test used to diagnose it. Some people have both IFG and IGT.

- IFG is a condition in which the blood sugar level is high (100 to 125 milligrams per deciliter or mg/dL) after an overnight fast, but not high enough to be classified as diabetes. (The former definition of IFG was 110 mg/dl to 125 mg/dl.)
- IGT is a condition in which the blood sugar level is high (140 to 199 mg/dL) after a 2-hour oral glucose tolerance test, but is not high enough to be classified as diabetes. (The ADA expert committee did not change the definition of IGT.)

Steps to take to prevent pre-diabetes

1. Get Active

Physical activity helps your muscle cells use blood glucose, which they need for energy, by making those cells more sensitive to insulin. People who exercise for 30 minutes, five times a week have a far smaller risk of developing diabetes.

2. Eat Well

Let fruits, vegetables and whole grains make up the bulk of your meals and snacks. Following a low-calorie, low-fat diet can help you lose weight and decrease your chances of developing diabetes.

